

SECRETCOR-1194
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22 JUN 1961

NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

MEMORANDUM FOR : Deputy Director (Plans)

THROUGH : Acting Chief, Development Projects Division, DD/P

SUBJECT : CORONA

1. This memorandum is for your information.

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2. In mid-April Dr. Charyk, John Parangosky and I met with [] and Lockheed representatives to discuss various aspects of the CORONA/ARGON program and to settle on a schedule of launchings of various payloads for the present summer season. The scheduling issues at that time involved relative priority of ARGON and CORONA payloads and the prospects of launching all of the new C Triple Prime cameras during the present summer.

3. Since that meeting I have given almost daily attention to the C Triple Prime Camera problems. As you know, this camera promises to increase our resolution by a factor of 2, but is limited to launching no later than the first week in September because of the relatively slow film necessary to obtain the high resolution potential. As of 10 June it still appeared possible to launch all six of the C Triple Prime cameras this season. This would have been at the expense of ARGON payloads during the same period which are being very strongly advocated by people in DOD R & E and in the Army. Due to slippages in vehicle availability and in ITEK delivery of C Triple Prime cameras at this writing, it appears that no more than four of the C Triple Prime cameras can be launched this summer.

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4. We are now, however, confronted with an issue between ourselves and [] which could reduce the number of C Triple Prime launchings even further. [] has been under extreme pressure to achieve a higher degree of success in this program. This, I am reasonably certain, stems from Gen. Schriever and was undoubtedly generated by the fact that subsequent to the success of DISCOVERER XVIII on 7 December, there were six successive failures, all involving deficiencies in the THOR-AGENA combination. [] has adopted a policy of extreme conservatism and has extended this to include the payload area. Previously we have looked to [] for all decisions regarding the vehicle performance and he has accepted our decisions regarding payload. The attached communication from ITEK to Lockheed summarizes this philosophy and its implications on the program for this summer, despite the fact that it is addressed to the wrong person in the wrong place to solve our problems with [] position as stated to us and to Lockheed is that all development problems, large or small, important or unimportant, will be solved and that all tests will be

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satisfactorily completed before he will agree to launch of the C Triple Prime Camera. He has indicated to me that he will appeal any deviation from this policy to Dr. Charyk.

5. It is true that at this moment the C Triple Prime camera is not yet completely debugged. However, we have under test at the moment engineering fixes for the one serious problem which is double exposure, and the remaining minor problems are either disappearing or in the process of being fixed. Therefore in view of the promised improvement in quality and quadrupling of information content possible from the C Triple Prime camera, it seems that some reasonable risks can be tolerated in pronouncing the payload ready for flight.

6. Din Land has said in the past that, should we ever need his support on major issues in the program, he would be quite willing to resolve such issues with Joe Charyk. Inasmuch as you were planning to see Din tomorrow afternoon and Charyk plans to see him on Tuesday, 27 June, I should like to make the following request. If you can describe this issue to Din Land, he in turn could raise it with Joe Charyk and determine if Charyk would be inclined to support the ultra-conservative or the more "chancy" philosophy with regard to the payload. If, hopefully, the latter, I would ask that Din request Joe Charyk to appropriately instruct to accept our decision-making prerogative on payload matters only and to modify his conservative policy on the payload area. It seems to me this is the most effective and expeditious way of resolving a potentially difficult situation.

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/S/
EUGENE F. KIEFER
SA/TA/DPD-DD/P

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Att:

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